Visitor Services Project

Whitman Mission National Historic Site

Visitor Services Project Report 56 Cooperative Park Studies Unit

Visitor Services Project Whitman Mission National Historic Site

Dwight L. Madison

Report 56

January 1994

Dwight Madison is VSP Eastern Coordinator, National Park Service, based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank the staff at Whitman Mission National Historic Site for their assistance with this study. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.

Visitor Services Project Whitman Mission National Historic Site

Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Whitman Mission National Historic Site during June 27 to July 3, 1993. A total of 290 questionnaires were distributed and 242 returned, an 83% response rate.
- This report profiles Whitman Mission National Historic Site visitors. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary.
- Visitors were often in family groups (74%). Twenty-six percent of visitors were 15 years old or younger; 26% were 36-50 years old. Most (70%) were first time visitors to Whitman Mission.
- Visitors from foreign countries comprised 6% of the visitation. Seventy-seven percent of the U.S. visitors came from Washington and Oregon, with smaller numbers from many other states.
- Eighty-eight percent of the visitors reported staying two hours or less at Whitman Mission. Seventy-nine percent of visitors reported visiting the visitor center.
- Visitors most often used previous visits (32%), advice from friends and relatives (27%) and maps (26%) as sources of information about the park. Ninety-four percent of the visitors did not feel that Whitman Mission National Historic Site was difficult to locate.
- The most commonly used interpretive/information services were the visitor center exhibits (93%), the park brochure (81%) and the ranger at the information desk (76%). The ranger at the information desk, the visitor center exhibits and the park brochure received the highest quality ratings.
- The most commonly used facilities were the parking area (97%), the trails (90%) and the restrooms (84%). The restrooms, the sales publications area and the parking area received the highest quality ratings.
- Local sites most often visited were the Fort Walla Walla Museum (34%), Whitman College (24%) and Pioneer Park (23%). Ninety-five per cent of visitors said noise, modern structures, and air or other types of pollution did not interfere with their experience at Whitman Mission.
- Most visitors (64%) would prefer that the Mission House area be maintained as it is now.
- Visitors made many additional comments.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact
Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies
Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences,
Moscow, Idaho 83844 or call (208) 885-7129.

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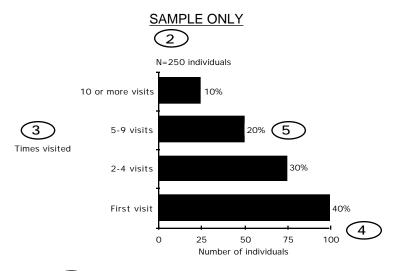
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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a study of visitors at Whitman Mission National Historic Site (referred to as "Whitman Mission"). This visitor study was conducted June 27 to July 3, 1993 by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho.

A <u>Methods</u> section discusses the procedures and limitations of the study. The <u>Results</u> section follows, including a summary of visitor comments. Next, a <u>Menu for Further Analysis</u> helps managers request additional analyses. The final section has a copy of the <u>Questionnaire</u>. The separate appendix includes a comment summary and the visitors' unedited comments.

Many of this report's graphs resemble the example below. The large numbers refer to explanations following the graph.



- 1 Figure 4: Number of visits
- 1: The figure title describes the graph's information.
- 2: Listed above the graph, the 'N' shows the number of visitors responding and a description of the chart's information. Interpret data with an 'N' of less than 30 with CAUTION! as the results may be unreliable.
- 3: Vertical information describes categories.
- 4: Horizontal information shows the number or proportions in each category.
- 5: In most graphs, percentages provide additional information.

METHODS

General strategy

Interviews were conducted and questionnaires distributed to a sample of selected visitors visiting Whitman Mission National Historic Site during June 27 to July 3, 1993. Visitors completed the questionnaire during or after their trip and then returned it by mail.

Questionnaire design and administration

The questionnaire design used the standard format of previous Visitor Services Project studies. See the end of this report for a copy of the questionnaire.

Visitors were sampled as they entered the visitor center at Whitman Mission National Historic Site. Every fifth visitor was chosen for the sample, based on a sampling plan similar to visitor studies at other National Park sites. Selected visitor groups were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study and asked to participate. If visitors agreed, the interview took approximately two minutes. These interviews included determining group size, group type and the age of the adult who would complete the questionnaire. This individual was asked his or her name, address and telephone number for the later mailing of a reminderthank you postcard.

Two weeks following the survey, a reminder-thank you postcard was mailed to all participants. Replacement questionnaires were mailed to participants who had not returned their questionnaires four weeks after the survey.

Data analysis

Returned questionnaires were coded and the information entered into a computer. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were calculated using a standard statistical software package, "Statistical Analysis System" (SAS). Respondents' comments were summarized.

This study collected information on both visitor groups and individual Sample size, group members. Thus, the sample size ("N"), varies from figure to figure. For example, while Figure 1 shows information for 241 visitor groups, Figure 4 presents data for 760 individuals. A note above each figure's graph specifies the information illustrated.

missing data and reporting errors

Occasionally, a respondent may not have answered all of the questions, or may have answered some incorrectly. Unanswered questions create missing data and cause the number in the sample to vary from figure to figure. For example, although 242 questionnaires were returned, Figure 1 shows data for only 241 respondents.

Questions answered incorrectly due to carelessness, misunderstanding directions and so forth, turn up in the data as reporting errors. These create small data inconsistencies.

Like all surveys, this study has limitations which should be considered when interpreting the results.

Limitations

- 1. It is not possible to know whether visitor responses reflect actual behavior. This disadvantage applies to all such studies and is reduced by having visitors fill out the questionnaire soon after they visit the park.
- 2. The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of June 27 to July 3, 1993. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year.
- 3. Caution is advised when interpreting any data with a sample size of less than 30, as the results may be unreliable. Whenever the sample size is less than 30, the word "CAUTION!" is included in the graph, figure or table.

RESULTS

Visitors contacted

Two hundred ninety visitor groups were contacted;
100% accepted questionnaires. Two forty-two visitor groups
completed and returned their questionnaires, an 83% response rate.

Table 1 compares information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted and the actual respondents who returned questionnaires. Non-response bias was insignificant.

Table 1: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total sample			ctual ondents
	N	Avg.	N .	Avg.
Age of respondent (years)	290	48.2	238	48.6
Group size	290	3.63	241	3.65

Demographics

Figure 1 shows group sizes, which varied from one person to 54 people. Eighty percent of Whitman Mission visitors came in groups of four people or less. Seventy-four percent of visitors came in groups identified as family, as shown in Figure 2.

Ninety three percent of visitors identified themselves as white, not of Hispanic origin as shown in Figure 3. Figure 4 shows varied age groups; the most common were visitors aged 15 or younger (26%) and 36-50 years old (26%). Most visitors (70%) were first-time visitors (see Figure 5).

Visitors from foreign countries comprised 6% of all visitation.

Map 2 and Table 3 show that the many of the U.S. visitors came from Washington, Oregon and California.

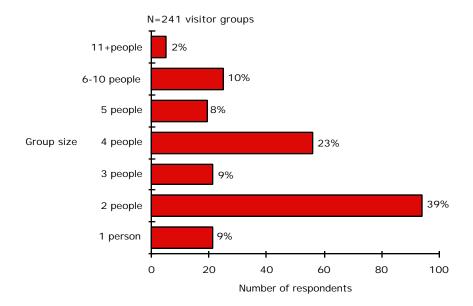


Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

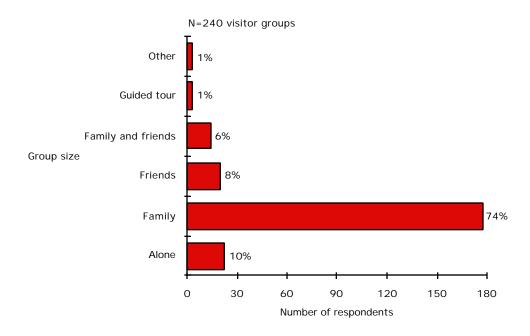


Figure 2: Visitor group types

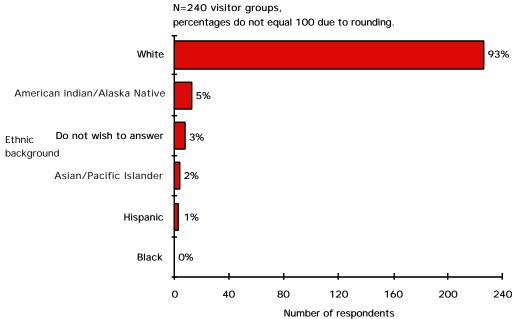
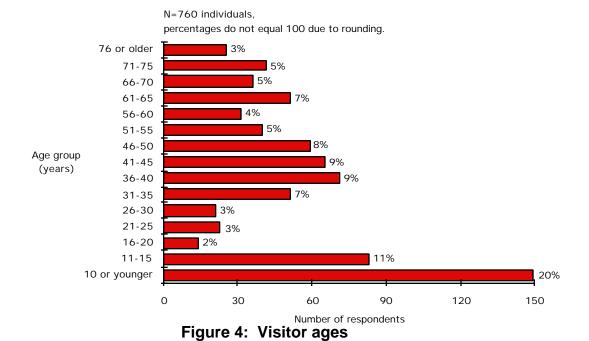


Figure 3: Visitor ethnic backgrounds



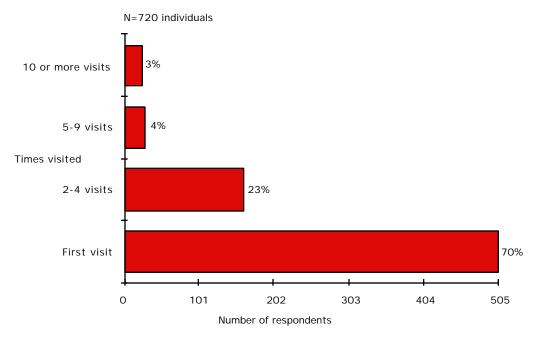


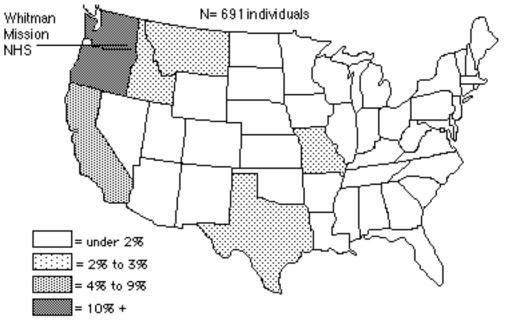
Figure 5: Number of visits



Map 1: Proportion of international visitors by country

Table 2: Foreign visitors by country of residence N=14 individuals CAUTION!

Country	Number of individuals	% of international visitors
Canada	8	57
Egypt	4	29
Australia	2	14



Map 2: Proportion of visitors from each state

Table 3: Proportion of visitors from each state N=691 individuals; percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of	% of
	individuals	visitors
Washington	368	53
Oregon	165	24
California	25	4
Idaho	18	3
Texas	13	2
Missouri	12	2
Montana	11	2
Other states (26) and D.C.	79	11

Length of stay

Eighty-eight percent of visitors reported staying two hours or less at Whitman Mission (see Figure 6).

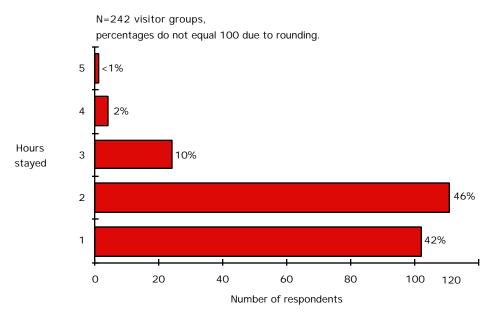


Figure 6: Length of stay

Visitors indicated the sites they visited at Whitman Mission.

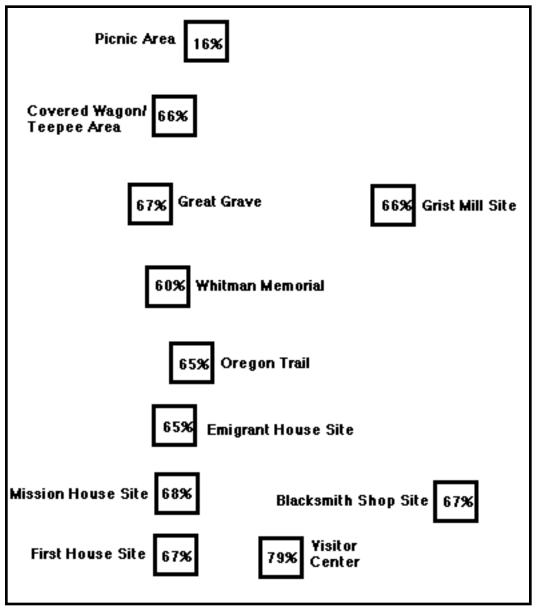
Sites

Map 3 shows the proportion of visitors visiting each site. The visitor

visited

center was the most visited site.

N=242 percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could visit more than one site



Map 3: Sites visited

Sources of park information

As shown in Figure 7, the most often used sources of information about the park were previous visits (32%), advice from friends and relatives (27%), and maps . "Other sources" included history books, schools, and signs on highway.

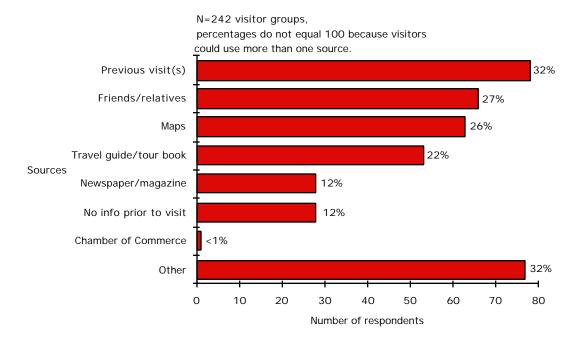


Figure 7: Sources of park information

The visitors were asked: Did you and your group find it difficult to locate Whitman Mission National Historic Site?" Figure 8 shows that 94% responded no. Those visitors who answered yes were also asked how could locating the park be made easier. Most stated that placing more signs in Walla Walla along the highway and streets that lead to the site would be the best way to improve locating the site.

Locating site

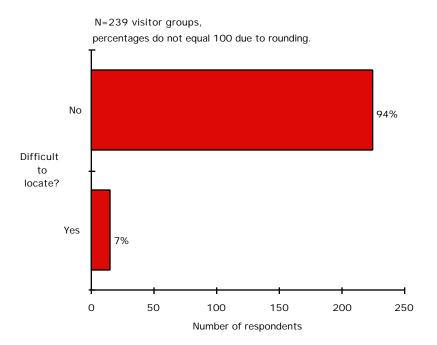


Figure 8: Site difficult to locate

Interpretive/ information services used and quality

The most commonly used interpretive/information services at Whitman Mission were the visitor center exhibits (93%), park brochure (81%) and the ranger at the information desk (76%), as shown in Figure 9. The least used service was the tree and bird guide (10%). "Other" was identified as signs and park personnel.

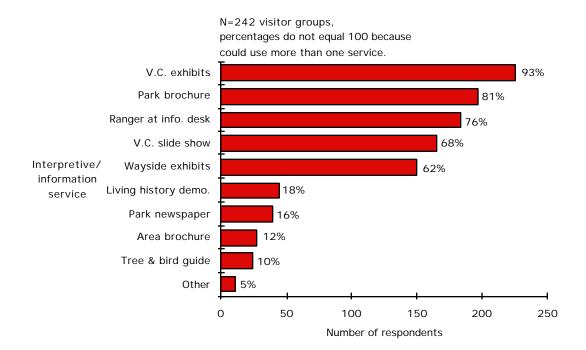


Figure 9: Use of interpretive/information services

Visitors rated the quality of services they used. They used a five point scale (see the box below).

QUALITY
1=very good
2=good
3=average
4=poor
5=very poor

Figures 10-19 show that several services were given high "good" to "very good" ratings: the ranger at the information desk (91%), visitor center exhibits (91%), and the park brochure (90%). The services receiving the highest "poor" to "very poor" ratings were living history demonstration (15%), and the park newspaper (9%).

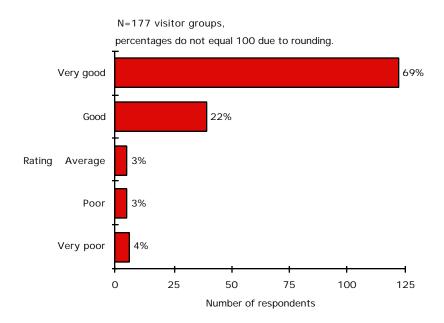


Figure 10: Quality of ranger at information desk

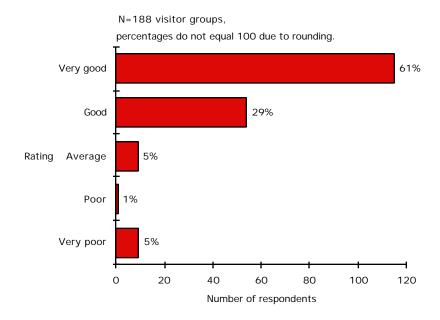


Figure 11: Quality of park brochure

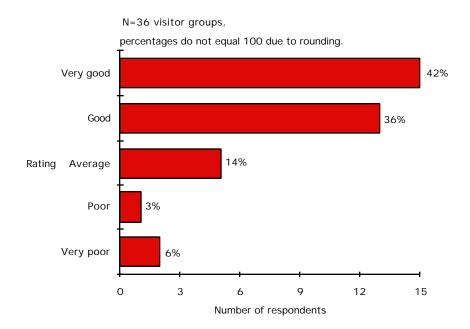


Figure 12 Quality of park newspaper

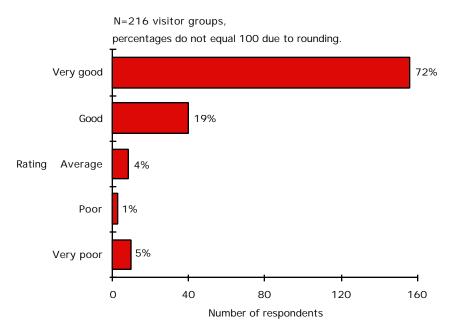


Figure 13: Quality of visitor center exhibits

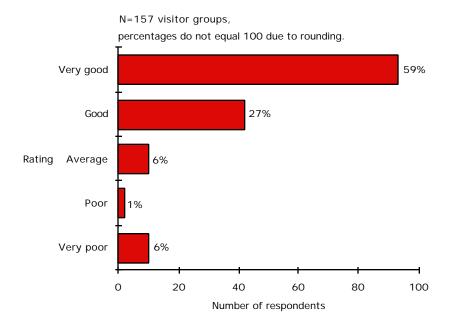


Figure 14: Quality of visitor center slide show

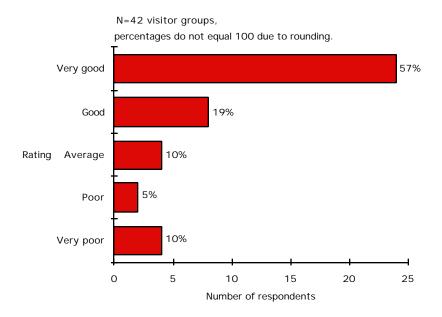


Figure 15: Quality of living history demonstration

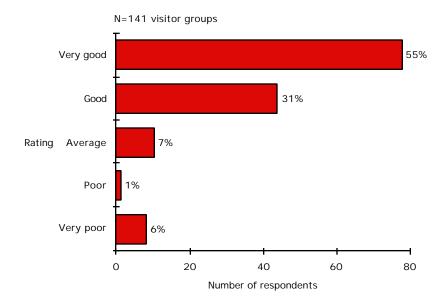


Figure 16: Quality of wayside exhibits

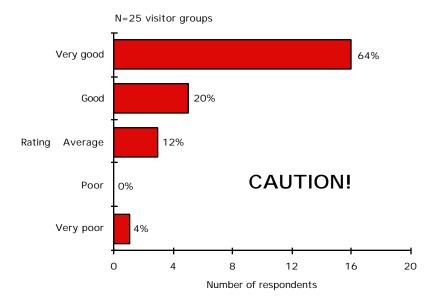


Figure 17: Quality of surrounding area brochures

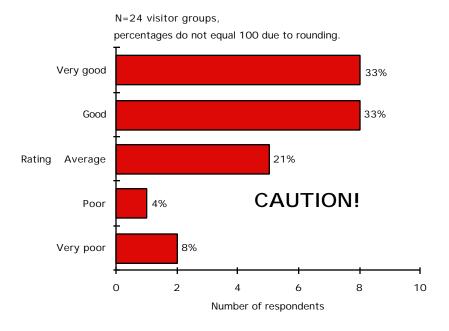


Figure 18: Quality of tree and bird guide

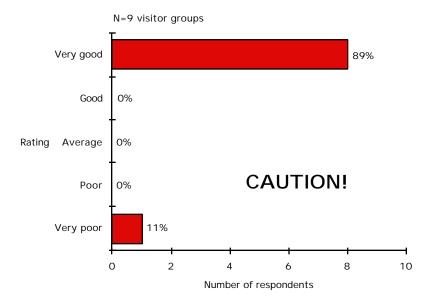


Figure 19: Quality of "other" interpretive/information services

The most commonly used facilities at Whitman Mission National Historic Site were the parking area (97%), trails (90%) and the restrooms (84%), as shown in Figure 20. The least used service was the picnic area (11%). "Other" was identified as drinking fountains and the grounds.

Facilities use and quality

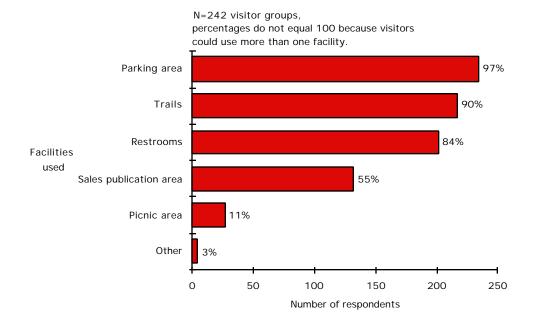


Figure 20: Use of facilities

Visitors rated the quality of facilities they used. They used a five point scale (see the box below).

QUALITY
1=very good
2=good
3=average
4=poor
5=very poor

Figures 21-26 show that several facilities were given high "good" to "very good" ratings: the parking area (93%), trails (92%), restrooms (86%) and sales publication area (85%). The services receiving the highest "poor" to "very poor" ratings were restrooms (7%), and trails (7%).

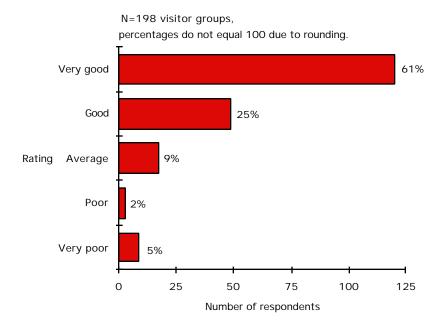


Figure 21: Quality of restrooms

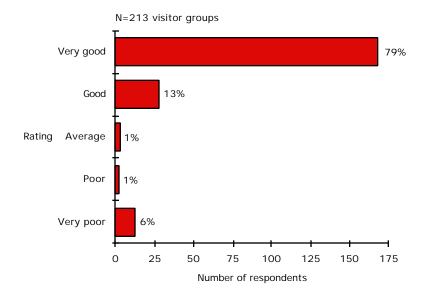


Figure 22: Quality of trails

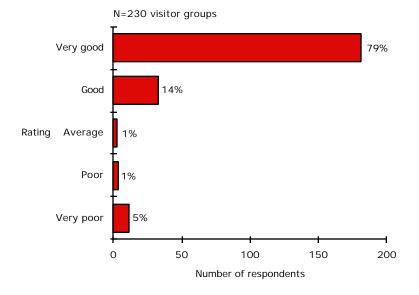


Figure 23 Quality of parking area

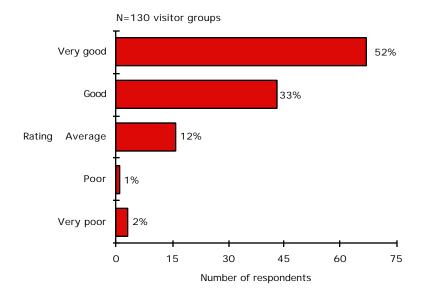


Figure 24: Quality of sales publication area

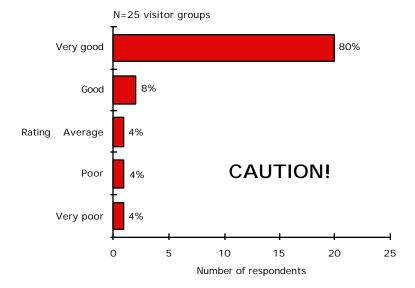


Figure 25: Quality of picnic area

Visitors were asked what sites they visited or planned to visit on this trip. **Local sites**The sites most often visited were the Fort Walla Walla museum (34%), Whitman **visited**College (24%) and Pioneer Park (23%), as shown in Figure 27.

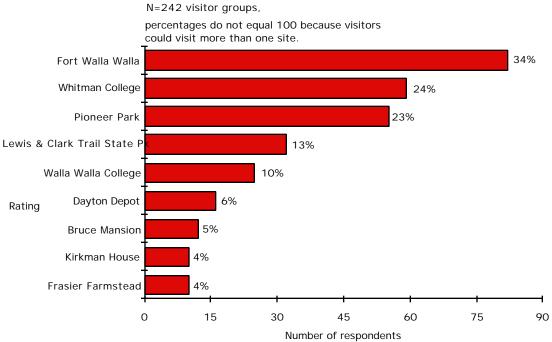


Figure 26: Local sites visited

Pollution Interference upon visitor experience

Visitors were asked, "During this visit, did noise, modern structures, air or other types of pollution interfere with your experience?" Figure 28 shows that 95% said no. Those visitors who said yes were asked how pollution interfered with their experience. A summary of their comments appear below

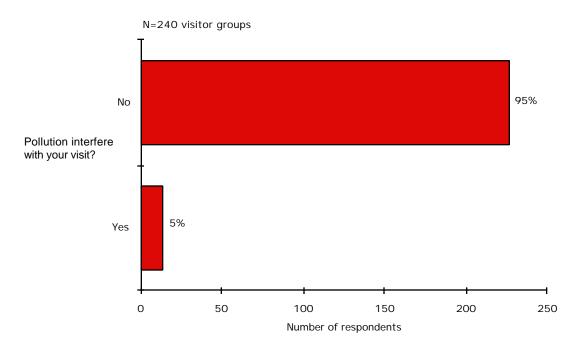


Figure 27: Pollution interference upon visitor experience

Table 4: What pollution interfered with experience N=14 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Noxious weeds	2
Lawn mowers being used at the site	2
Other comments	10

Visitors were asked how they would like the Mission House area Mainten maintained in the future. Figure 29 shows that 64% prefer that the park maintain options the area as it is now.

Maintenance options visitors prefer

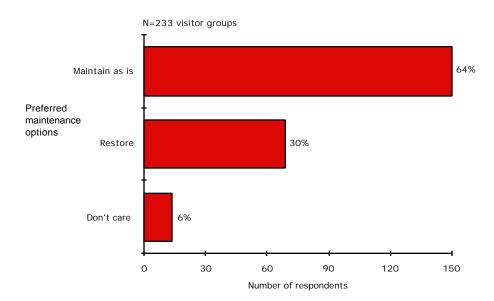


Figure 28: Preferred maintenance options

Ideas/ Visitors were asked to write in their own words the main ideas

messages (messages) that they learned from the exhibits and other services offered

at Whitman Mission National Historic Site. Their comments are

exhibits/ summarized below.

services

Table 5: Ideas /messages learned N=252 comments;

N=252 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Better understanding of what occurred at the site	36
Misunderstanding caused tragedy	29
Learned of hardships of the people	27
Learned about the history of the Whitmans	17
Learned about the history of the area	16
Learned more about the local Indians	14
Admiration for pioneers & missionaries	13
Conflict between native Americans and settlers	12
Whitmans did not respect Indian culture 11	
Learned about the role of the Oregon Trail in the area	9
Understand why Whitmans died 8	
Whitmans had courage & dedication	7
Cayuse Indians indifferent to Christianity 4	
Whitmans brought Christian religion to the area	3
Whitmans helped people	3
Learned about the lifestyle of local people in that era	3
Whitmans suffered hardships to spread their religion	3
Whitmans tried to change Indians	3 3 3 3 2
Learned about the work of the early missionaries	2
Plan to convert the Indians harmed settlers and Indians Indians did not value human life 2	2
Learned that the mission was a way station	2
Indians were brave	2
Exhibit led to other questions	2
Other comments	22
Other Comments	44

Many visitors wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. Their comments are summarized below and in the appendix. Some comments offer specific suggestions on how to improve the park; others describe what visitors enjoyed or did not enjoy.

Comment summary

N=221 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Whitman staff friendly/helpful Ranger rude/unfriendly Site appears to be overstaffed	8 2 2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Like museum displays Whitman story presented as too one-sided Enjoyed the slide show Living history of mission should be portrayed More details about pioneer conditions Enjoyed Cowboy poet More info about flora Exhibit room set up is confusing I miss the old displays Other comments	13 5 4 3 3 2 2 2 2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Mission buildings should be reconstructed Grounds well maintained Other comments	20 17 5
CONCESSIONS	
Other comments	2
VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT	
VSP ranger friendly/helpful	3
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Enjoyed the visit I have visited here before Interested in Oregon Trail experience Enjoyed the history	30 11 10 8

Glad our history is being preserved	6
Keep up the good work	4
Site is peaceful/quiet	4
Good learning experience	3
Not enough time	3
Great view from the top of the hill	2
Site is a tribute to the Whitmans	2
Appreciate the NPS	2
Will visit again	2
Studied about site in school	2
Other comments	17

MENU FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

Park personnel who wish to see other tables, graphs, and maps to learn more about their visitors may request such information from the VSP. Two kinds of analyses are available:

- 1) Two-way comparisons compare two characteristics. For example, to learn about which facility this visit a particular age group used request a comparison of <u>facilities used</u> by <u>age group</u>, to learn how the facilities visitor used this visit varied among group types, request a comparison of <u>facilities used</u> by <u>group type</u>.
- 2) Three-way comparisons compare a two-way comparison to a third characteristic. For example, to learn about what <u>interpretive/information</u> services were used by different visitor group types and sizes, request a comparison of <u>interpretive/information</u> <u>services</u> used by <u>group type</u> by <u>group size</u>; to learn about what interpretive/information services were used by different age groups by group type, request a comparison of interpretive/information services by age groups by group type.

Consult the list of characteristics for Whitman Mission National Historic Site visitors; then complete the appropriate blanks on the order form. Make a copy of the order form which follows the example below.

SAMPLE

Visitor Services Project Analysis Order Form Whitman Mission National Historic Site Report 56

Date of request:/_	/		
Person requesting analysis	S:		
Phone number (commercia	al):		
The following list has the v your park. Use this list to f and three-way comparison you may select a single pro	find the characteristic is. Be as specific as p	s for which you want to re possible	equest additional two-way
Group size	Length of stay		Number times visited
Group type	 Sites visited 		 Ethnic background
• Age	 Facilities use 		Sources of park info
State residence	Interpretive/inform	mation services use	 Locating site
Country residence	-		Maintenance options
Interferences among visitor activities	•Quality of interpre	tive/information services	
Two-way comparisons (wr	ite in the appropriate	variables from the above	list)
		by	
		by	
		by	
Three-way comparisons (v	vrite in the appropriate	e variables from the above	/e list)
	by	by	
	by	by	
	by	by	
Special instructions			

Mail to:

Visitor Services Project, CPSU
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83843-4199

QUESTIONNAIRE

Visitor Services Project Publications

Reports 1-4 (pilot studies) are available from the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit. All VSP reports listed below are available from the parks where the studies were conducted.

1985

North Cascades National Park Service Complex

1986

6. Crater Lake National Park

1987

- 7. Gettysburg National Military Park
- 8. Independence National Historical Park
- 9. Valley Forge National Historical Park
- 10. Colonial National Historical Park
- 11. Grand Teton National Park
- 12. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
- 13. Mesa Verde National Park
- 14. Shenandoah National Park
- 15. Yellowstone National Park
- 16. Independence National Historical Park: Four Seasons Study

1988

- 17. Glen Canyon National Recreational Area
- 18. Denali National Park and Preserve
- 19. Bryce Canyon National Park
- 20. Craters of the Moon National Monument

1989

- 21. Everglades National Park
- 22. Statue of Liberty National Monument
- 23. The White House Tours, President's Park
- 24. Lincoln Home National Historical Site
- 25. Yellowstone National Park
- 26. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
- 27. Muir Woods National Monument

1990

- 28. Canyonlands National Park
- 29. White Sands National Monument
- 30. National Monuments
- 31. Kenai Fjords National Park
- 32. Gateway National Recreation Area
- 33. Petersburg National Battlefield
- 34. Death Valley National Monument
- 35. Glacier National Park
- 36. Scott's Bluff National Monument
- 37. John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

1991

- 38. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park
- 39. Joshua Tree National Monument
- 40. The White House Tours, President's Park
- 41. Natchez Trace Parkway
- 42. Stehekin-North Cascades National Park/Lake Chelan National Rec. Area
- 43. City of Rocks National Reserve
- 44. The White House Tours, President's Park

1992

- 45. Big Bend National Park
- 46. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
- 47. Glen Echo Park
- 48. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
- 49. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
- 50. Zion National park
- 51. New River Gorge National River
- 52. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park
- 53. Arlington House The Robert E. Lee Memorial

1993

- 54. Belle Haven Park/Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve
- 55. Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
- 56. Whitman Mission National Historic Site

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83843-4199 or call (208) 885-7129.

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January 1994

Visitor Services Project

Whitman Mission National Historic Site

Appendix

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Appendix

Dwight L. Madison

Report 56

January 1994

Dwight Madison is VSP Eastern Coordinator, National Park Service based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank the staff at Whitman Mission National Historic Site for their assistance with this study. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.

Visitor Comment Summary

N=221 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

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Whitman staff friendly/helpful Ranger rude/unfriendly Site appears to be overstaffed	8 2 2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
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VSP ranger friendly/helpful	3
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Enjoyed the visit I have visited here before Interested in Oregon Trail experience Enjoyed the history Glad our history is being preserved Keep up the good work Site is peaceful/quiet Good learning experience Not enough time Great view from the top of the hill Site is a tribute to the Whitmans Appreciate the NPS Will visit again Studied about site in school Other comments	30 11 10 8 6 4 4 3 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2

Printing Instructions for Whitman Mission National Historic Site Draft Report

Whitman Mission National Historic Site Draft Report

I need 2 bound copies Both copies should have a gray front & back cover

Inside Title page should be Xeroxed on white paper (single page). Report Summary page should be Xeroxed on <u>blue</u> paper (single page). Table of contents page should be Xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Pages 1-30 should be duplexed on white paper.

Analysis order form should be Xeroxed on white paper (single page)

Page 32 (Questionnaire title page) should be Xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Questionnaire section duplex on white paper

Publications page on inside back cover page.

Printing Instructions for Whitman Mission National Historic Site Report & Appendix

Whitman Mission National Historic Site Report

I need 27 copies: 26 bound copies and 1 copy unbound.

All copies should have a gray front & back cover

Inside Title page should be on white paper (single page).
Report Summary page should be Xeroxed on <u>blue</u> paper (single page).
Table of contents page should be Xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Pages 1-30 should be duplexed on white paper.

Analysis order forms should be on white paper (single page)

Page 32(Questionnaire title page) should be Xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Questionnaire section duplex on white paper

**NPS D 18 January 1994 page should be facing back cover page (the one that has the publications listed)

Whitman Mission National Historic Site Appendix Section

I need 9 copies: 8 bound copies and <u>1 copy unbound.</u>
All copies should have a gray front & back cover.

Inside Title page should be Xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Page 1 (comment summary) xerox on <u>blue paper</u>.

Visitor comment pages duplex on white paper.

Sheet	number
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	

Group size
53
75
49
62
49
47
64
50
52
52
-
63
59
118
53
73
-
79
53
2

Respondent Ag	١
754	
756	
800	
752	
926	
873	
861	
769	
806	
832	
820	
862	
813	
772	
818	
880	
861	
47	

1053 14002

Total

290 contacts

no refusals

242 returned

83.4% return rate

Group size 1053/290=3.63

Respondent age 14002/290=48.2